1178

PALAMON

AND

ARCITE;

OR,

THE KNIGHT's TALE:

WRITTEN BY

CHAUCER,

AND MODERNIZED

By Mr. DRYDEN.

IN THREE BOOKS.

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PALAMON AND ARCITE:

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KNIGHT'S TALE.

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BOOK I.

In days of old, there liv'd, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince; and Theseus was his name:
A chief, who more in feats of arms excell'd,
The rising nor the setting sun beheld---
Of Athens he was lord: much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown;
In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,
Whom first by force he conquer'd, then by love:
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theseus ride,
With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his side.
I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way:
But, were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy queen and Hero knight,

The town besieg'd, and how much blood it cost
The female army, and th' Athenian host;
The spousals of Hippolita the queen;
What tilts and turneys at the feast were seen;
The storm at their return; the ladies fear;
But these, and other things, I must forbear.
The field is spacious I design to sow
With oxen far unfit to draw the plow:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waste my strength;
And trivial accidents shall be forborn,
That others may have time to take their turn;
As was at first enjoin'd us by mine host,
That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,
Should win his supper at our common cost.
And therefore where I left, I will pursue,
This ancient story, whether false or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mention'd, full of high renown,
In this array drew near th' Athenian town;
When in his pomp and utmost of his pride,
Marching, he chanc'd to cast his eye aside,
And saw a choir of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two across the common way:
At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,
Creeping and crying, till they seiz'd at last
His courser's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.
Tell me, said Theseus, what and whence you are
And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph in ill-omen'd weeds?
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy
With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?
Or are you injur'd, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief.

The most in years of all the mourning train
Began ;—(but swooned first away for pain)—
Then scarce recover'd, spoke : nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O king, th' afflicted to redress,
And fame has fill'd the world with thy success :
We, wretched women, sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refus'd to none :
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief :
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till, thanks to giddy chance, which never bears
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate ;
And here in hope of thy return we wait,
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But rev'rence thou the pow'r whose name it bears,
Relieve th' oppress'd, and wipe the widow's tears—
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen ;
At Thebes he fell—curst be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array,
To make their moan, their lords in battle lost
Before that town besieg'd by our confed'rate host :
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,
Denies the rites of fun'ral fires to those
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed :
At this she shriek'd aloud ; the mournful train
Echo'd her grief, and grov'ling on the plain,

With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Besought his pity to their helpless kind!
The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He sigh'd; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And what e'er else to chivalry belongs,
He would not cease, till he reveng'd their wrongs:
That Greece shou'd see perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel Creon find his just reward.
He said no more, but, shunning all delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd Athens on his way,
But left his sister and his queen behind,
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind:
Where in an Argent field the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car:
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead seem'd to glow with fire;
Ev'n the ground glitter'd where the standard flew,
And the green grass was dy'd to sanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaure:
The soldiers shout around with gen'rous rage,
And in that victory their own presage.
He prais'd their ardour; inly pleas'd to see
His host the flow'r of Grecian chivalry.
All day he march'd, and all th' ensuing night,
And saw the city with returning light.
The process of the war I need not tell,
How Theseus conquer'd, and how Creon fell;
Or after, how by storm the walls were won,
Or how the victor sack'd and burn'd the town;

How to the ladies he restor'd again
The bodies of their lords in battle slain,
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd;
All these to fitter times shall be deferr'd:
I spare the widows tears, their woeful cries,
And howling at their husbands obsequies;
How Theseus at these fun'rals did assist,
And with what gifts the mourning dames dismiss'd.
Thus when the victor chief had Creon slain,
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain
His mighty camp; and when the day return'd,
The country wasted, and the hamlets burn'd;
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without controul to strip and spoil the dead.
There, in a heap of slain, among the rest,
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppress'd
Of slaughter'd foes, whom first to death they sent,
The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they seem'd,
Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deem'd:
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their swords, their shields, their surcoats were the same.
Close by each other laid they press'd the ground,
Their manly bosoms pierc'd with many a grisly wound:
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
But some faint signs of feeble life appear:
The wandring breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulse, and hardly heav'd the heart.
These two were sisters sons; and Arcite one,
Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,
And softly both convey'd to Theseus' tent;
Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,
He to his city sent as pris'ners of the war,

Hopeless of ransom, and condemn'd to lie
In durance, doom'd a lingring death to die.
This done, he march'd away with warlike sound,
And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more
renown'd.
But in a tow'r, and never to be loos'd,
The woeful captive kinsmen are inclos'd:
Thus year by year they pass, and day by day;
Till once ('twas on the morn of cheerful May)
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lilly on the flow'ry green,
More fresh than May her self in blossoms new,
(For with the rosie colour strove her hue)
Wak'd as her custom was before the day,
To do th' observance due to sprightly May:
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and break their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves,
Inspires new flames, revives extinguish'd loves;
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Arose, and dress'd her self in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair,
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair;
A ribband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wanton'd in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden-walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.
At ev'ry turn, she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose, and ev'ry rose she drew
She shook the stalk, and brush'd away the dew;
Then party-colour'd flow'rs of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:

This done, she sung and carol'd out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
Ev'n wond'ring Philomel forgot to sing
And learn'd from her to welcome in the spring.
The tow'r, of which before was mention made,
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall:
The garden was enclos'd within the square,
Where young Emilia took the morning-air.
It happen'd Palamon, the pris'ner knight,
Restless for woe, arose before the light,
And with his jailor's leave desir'd to breathe
An air more wholsome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tow'r he took his way,
Cheer'd with the promise of a glorious day:
Then cast a languishing regard around,
And saw with hateful eyes the temples crown'd
With golden spires, and all the hostile ground.
He sigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, because he knew
'Twas but a larger goal he had in view;
Then look'd below, and from the castle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight;
The garden, which before he had not seen,
In spring's new livery clad of white and green,
Fresh flow'rs in wide Parterres, and shady walks between.
This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms across,
He stood, reflecting on his country's loss;
Himself an object of the public scorn,
And often wish'd he never had been born.
At last (for so his destiny requir'd)
With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,
He thro' a little window cast his sight,
Tho' thick of bars, that gave a scanty light:
But even that glimmering serv'd him to descry
Th' inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but seiz'd with sudden smart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with overpow'ring light he stood,
Then started back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud.
Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haste,
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;
And ask'd him why he look'd so deadly wan,
And whence, and how his change of cheer began,
Or who had done th' offence? but if, said he,
Your grief alone is hard captivity;
For love of heav'n, with patience undergo
A cureless ill, since fate will have it so:
So stood our Horoscope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,
Or other baleful aspect, rul'd our birth,
When all the friendly stars were under earth:
What e'er betides, by destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men, than vainly seek to shun.
Nor of my bonds, said Palamon again,
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguish caus'd my cry,
That moment I was hurt thro' either eye;
Pierc'd with a random-shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible decay:
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,
Whom, like Actæon, unaware I found.
Look how she walks along yon shady space,
Not Juno moves with more majestick grace;
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus, (for thy charms confess
That face was form'd in heav'n) nor art thou less;
Disguis'd in habit, undisguis'd in shape,
O! help us captives from our chains to 'scape:
But if our doom be past in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die;
Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our disgrace,
And shew compassion to the Theban race,

Oppress'd by tyrant pow'r! while yet he spoke,
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;
The fatal dart a ready passage found,
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:
So that, if Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
Then from his inmost soul he sigh'd, and said,
The beauty I behold has struck me dead:
Unknowingly she strikes, and kills by chance;
Poyson's in her eyes, and death in ev'ry glance.
O, I must ask; nor ask alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or must die for love.
Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies,
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)
Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein?
Jesting, said Arcite, suits but ill with pain.
It suits far worse (said Palamon again,
And bent his brows) with men who honour weigh,
Their faith to break, their friendship to betray;
But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one shou'd be the common good of both?
One soul shou'd both inspire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love?
To this before the gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to farther my design,
As I am bound by vow to farther thine:
Nor canst, nor dar'st thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honour, or thine own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend:
And wou'dst thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than release, would chuse to die?
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee first my pain---

For first my love began ere thine was born;
Thou, as my council, and my brother sworn,
Art bound t' assist my eldership of right,
Or justly to be deem'd a pe·jur'd knight.
Thus Palamon: but Arcite with disdain
In haughty language thus reply'd again—
Forsworn thy self: the traitor's odious name
I first return, and then disprove thy claim.
If love be passion, and that passion nurst
With strong desires, I lov'd the lady first.
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflam'd
To worship, and a pow'r cœlestial nam'd?
Thine was devotion to the blest above,
I saw the woman, and desir'd her love;
First own'd my passion, and to thee commend
Th' important secret, as my chosen friend.
Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of seeing first thy title prove?
And know'st thou not, no law is made for love?
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
Laws are but positive; love's pow'r, we see,
Is nature's sanction, and her first decree.
Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cause.
Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste:
Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall;
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
If then the laws of friendship I transgress,
I keep the greater, while I break the less;
And both are mad alike, since neither can possess.
Both hopeless to be ransom'd, never more
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.

Like Esop's hounds contending for the bone,
Each pleaded right, and would be Lord alone:
The fruitless fight continu'd all the day;
A cur came by and snatch'd the prize away.
As courtiers therefore justle for a grant,
And when they break their friendship plead their want,
So thou, if fortune will thy suit advance,
Love on; nor envy me my equal chance:
For I must love, and am resolv'd to try
My fate, or failing in th' adventure die.
Great was their strife, which hourly was renew'd,
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a surly stand,
And glar'd like angry lions as they pass'd,
And wish'd that every look might be their last.
It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came t'attend
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend:
Their love in early infancy began,
And rose as childhood ripen'd into man
Companions of the war; and lov'd so well,
That when one di'd, as ancient stories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But, to pursue my tale, to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since,
And honour'd by this young Thessalian Prince.
Theseus, to gratify his friend and guest,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,
Restor'd to liberty the captive knight;
But on these hard conditions I recite—
That if hereafter Arcite should be found
Within the compass of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head should pay the forfeit of th' offence.
To this, Pirithous, for his friend, agreed;
And on his promise was the prisoner freed.

Unpleas'd and pensive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life must pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?
What have I gain'd, he said, in prison pent,
If I but change my bonds for banishment?
And, banish'd from her sight, I suffer more
In freedom, than I felt in bonds before;
Forc'd from her presence, and condemn'd to live—
Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve:
Heaven is not but where Emily abides,
And where she's absent, all is hell besides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurst
Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first:
Had I not known that Prince, I still had been
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen;
For tho' I never can her grace deserve,
'Tis recompence enough to see and serve.
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is th' adventure; thine the victory:
Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face may'st feed thine eyes;
In prison? no—but blisful paradise!
Thou daily seest that sun of beauty shine,
And lov'st at least in love's extremest line.
I mourn in absence, love's eternal night:
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,
And art a comely, young and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various pow'r) may cease to frown,
And by some ways unknown thy wishes crown?
But I, the most forlorn of human-kind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But doom'd to drag my loathsome life in care,
For my reward, must end it in despair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
That governs all, and heav'n that all creates,

Nor art, nor nature's hand can ease my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief.
Then farewel youth, and all the joys that dwell
With youth and life, and life it self farewel.
But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of fortune, fate, or providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than those which we desire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are slain;
Some pray from prison to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murder'd by those they trusted with their life,
A favour'd servant, or a bosom wife.
Such dear-bought blessings happen ev'ry day,
Because we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken sots about the streets we roam;
Well knows the sot he has a certain home,
Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
And blunders on, and staggers ev'ry pace.
Thus all seek happiness; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my case, who thought our utmost good
Was in one word of freedom understood:
The fatal blessing came: from prison free,
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily.
Thus Arcite: but, if Arcite thus deplore
His suff'rings, Palamon yet suffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He swells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan;
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground;
The hollow tow'r with clamours rings around;
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,
And dropp'd all o'er with agony of sweat.
Alas! he cry'd! I, wretch, in prison pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine;

Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,
Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my despair:
Thou may'st, since thou hast youth and courage join'd,
A sweet behaviour, and a solid mind,
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace;
And after (by some treaty made) possess
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I
Must languish in despair, in prison die.
Thus all th' advantage of the strife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine.
The rage of jealousy then fir'd his soul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold despair, succeeding in her stead,
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.
His blood scarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.
Then thus he said; eternal deities,
Who rule the world with absolute decrees,
And write whatever time shall bring to pass
With pens of adamant on plates of brass;
What is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the rest is liable to pain,
And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain:
Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,
All these he must, and guiltless oft, endure:
Or does your justice, pow'r, or prescience fail,
When the good suffer, and the bad prevail?
What worse to wretched virtue could befal,
If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all?
Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate;
Them to pursue their pleasures you create;
We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,
And your commands, not our desires, fulfil;

Then when the creature is unjustly slain,
Yet after death at least he feels no pain;
But man in life surcharg'd with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doom'd to suffer more.
A serpent shoots his sting at unawaie;
An ambush'd thief forelays a traveller;
The man lies murder'd, while the thief and snake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Just, or unjust, I have my share of woe,
Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,
And Juno's wrath, that persecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus in a quartil, move
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love.
Let Palamon oppress'd in bondage mourn,
While to his exil'd rival we return.
By this the sun declining from his height,
The day had shorten'd to prolong the night:
The lengthen'd night gave length of misery
Both to the captive lover and the free.
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns.
The banish'd never hopes his love to see,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty.
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains,
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains:
One free, and all his motions uncontroul'd,
Beholds whate'er he wou'd, but what he wou'd behold.
Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell
What fortune to the banish'd knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loss of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What could be worse, than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?

He rav'd with all the madness of despair,
He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.
Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For wanting nourishment, he wanted tears:
His eye-balls in their hollow sockets sink,
Bereft of sleep; he loaths his meat and drink:
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murder'd man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves:
In solitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone;
Nor mix'd in mirth in youthful pleasure shares,
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears:
His spirits are so low, his voice is drown'd,
He hears as from afar, or in a swoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound:
Uncomb'd his locks, and squalid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire;
But full of museful mopings, which presage
The loss of reason, and conclude in rage.

This when he had endur'd a year and more,
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,
It happen'd once, that slumbring as he lay,
He dreamt (his dream began at break of day)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,
And with soft words his drooping spirits cheer'd:—
His hat, adorn'd with wings, disclos'd the god,
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod:
Such as he seem'd, when at his sire's command
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand;—
Arise, he said, to conqu'ring Athens go,
There fate appoints an end of all thy woe.
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a start;
Against his bosom bounc'd his heaving heart;
But soon he said, with scarce-recover'd breath,
And thither will I go, to meet my death,

Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,
Since in Emilia's sight I shall expire.
By chance he spy'd a mirrour while he spoke,
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look;
Wondring, he saw his features and his hue
So much were chang'd, that scarce himself he knew.
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this disguise.
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,
In low estate I may securely live,
And see unknown my mistress day by day:
He said; and cloath'd himself in course array—
A lab'ring hind in shew: then forth he went,
And to th' Athenian tow'rs his journey bent:
One squire attended in the same disguise,
Made conscious of his master's enterprize.
Arriv'd at Athens, soon he came to court,
Unknown, unquestion'd in that thick resort;
Proff'ring for hire his service at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair befel him, that for little gain
He serv'd at first Emilia's chamberlain;
And watchful all advantages to spy,
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;
And as his bones were big, and sinews strong,
Refus'd no toil that could to slaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.
He pass'd a year at least attending thus
On Emily, and call'd Philostratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much esteem'd, so well belov'd as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courtesy was blown:

All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That exercis'd within a higher sphere,
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.
Thus by the gen'ral voice was Arcite prais'd,
And by great Theseus to high favour rais'd;
Among his menial servants first enroll'd,
And largely entertain'd with sums of gold:
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent.
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame,
But cautiously conceal'd from whence it came.
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increase,
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace;
To Theseus person he was ever near,
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear.

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR, THE

KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK II.

WHILE Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.
For six long years immur'd, the captive knight
Had dragg'd his chains, and scarcely seen the light:
Lost liberty, and love at once he bore;
His prison pain'd him much, his passion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.
But when the sixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins receiv'd the sun,
Were it by chance, or forcèful destiny,
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,
Assisted by a friend one moonless night,
This Palamon from prison took his flight.
A pleasant beverage he prepar'd before
Of wine and honey mix'd, with added store
Of Opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who swallow'd unaware the sleepy draught,
And snor'd secure 'till morn, his senses bound
In slumber, and in long oblivion drown'd.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the rising sun.

A thick spread forest near the city lay,
To this with lengthen'd strides he took his way,
(For far he cou'd not fly, and fear'd the day).
Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight
When to his country come, his next design
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our style;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treach'rous fortune caught him in the snare.
The morning-lark, the messenger of day,
Saluted in her song the morning grey;
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all th' horizon laugh'd to see the joyous sight;
He with his tepid rays the rose renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, resolv'd to pay
Observance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery steed betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trode:
At ease he seem'd, and prancing o'er the plains,
Turn'd only to the grove his horse's reins,
The grove I nam'd before, and lighted there;
A woodbind garland sought to crown his hair;
Then turn'd his face against the rising day,
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.
For thee, sweet month, the groves green liv'ries wear;
If not the first, the fairest of the year:
For thee the graces lead the dancing hours,
And nature's ready pencil paints the flow'rs:
When thy short reign is past, the fev'rish sun
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.

So may thy tender blossoms fear no blite,
Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou shalt guide my wandring feet to find
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind.
His vows address'd, within the grove he stray'd,
Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd
His steps where secret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who flying death had there conceal'd his flight,
In breaks and brambles hid, and shunning mortal sight.
And less he knew him for his hated foe,
But fear'd him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been said of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears;
For this the wise are ever on their guard,
For, unforeseen, they say, is unprepar'd.
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,
And less than all suspected Palamon,
Who listning heard him, while he search'd the grove,
And loudly sung his roundelay of love;
But on the sudden stopp'd, and silent stood,
(As lovers often muse, and change their mood;)
Now high as heav'n, and then as low as hell;
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite having sung, with alter'd hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew
A desp'rate sigh, accusing heav'n and fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.
Curs'd be the day when first I did appear;
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year.
Still will the jealous queen pursue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:

Yet ceases not her hate; for all who come
From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.
I suffer for my blood: unjust decree!
That punishes another's crime on me.
In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,
The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my shame,
Has forc'd me to forsake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.
That side of heaven is all my enemy:
Mars ruin'd Thebes; his mother ruin'd me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Beside my self, th' unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theseus holds in bonds, and will not free,
(Without a crime) except his kin to me.
Yet these, and all the rest I cou'd endure;
But love's a malady without a cure:
Fierce love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,
He fires within, and hisses at my heart.
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue;
I suffer for the rest, I die for you.
Of such a goddess time leaves no record,
Who burn'd the temple where she was ador'd:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleas'd with my suff'rings, if you knew my pain.
At this a sickly qualm his heart assail'd,
His ears ring inward, and his senses fail'd.
No word miss'd Palamon of all he spoke,
But soon to deadly pale he chang'd his look:
He trembled ev'ry limb, and felt a smart,
As if cold steel had glided through his heart;
Nor longer staid, but starting from his place,
Discover'd stood, and shew'd his hostile face:
False traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,
Now art thou found forsworn, for Emily;
And dar'st attempt her love, for whom I die.

So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,
Against thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrow'd name: as false to me,
So false thou art to him who set thee free.
But rest assur'd, that either thou shalt die,
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily;
For though unarm'd I am, and (freed by chance)
Am here without my sword, or pointed lance;
Hope not, base man, unquestion'd hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.
Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His sword unsheath'd, and fiercely thus began:
Now by the gods, who govern heav'n above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy last, or in this grove
This hand should force thee to renounce thy love.
The surety which I gave thee, I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers perjury.
Know I will serve the fair in thy despight;
But since thou art my kinsman, and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms shall plead the titles of our love:
And heav'n so help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both unknown,
With arms of proof both for my self and thee;
(Chuse thou the best, and leave the worst to me)
And, that at better ease thou may'st abide,
Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,
And needful sustenance, that thou may'st be
A conquest better won, and worthy me.
His promise Palamon accepts; but pray'd,
To keep it better than the first he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.

Oh love! thou sternly dost thy pow'r maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign;
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon:
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite return'd, and, as in honour ty'd,
His foe with bedding, and with food supply'd;
Then, ere the day, two suits of armour sought,
Which born before him on his steed he brought:
Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure,
As might the strokes of two such arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in th' appointed place,
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue.
So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear;
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees
His course at distance by the bending trees;
And thinks, here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he must fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A gen'rous chillness seizes ev'ry part;
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn:
None greets, for none the greeting will return;
But in dumb surliness, each arm'd with care
His foe profess'd, as brother of the war:
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance
Against each other, arm'd with sword and lance:
They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore
Their corslets, and the thinnest parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,
And wounded, wound, 'till both were bath'd in blood;

And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the spot.
Fell Arcite like an angry tyger far'd,
And like a lion Palamon appear'd:
Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With rising bristles, and with frothy jaws,
Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound,
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,
Till fate an umpire sends their diff'rence to decide.
The pow'r that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heav'n foresees,
Call'd providence, or chance, or fatal sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united pow'r
One moment can retard th' appointed hour.
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years:
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on pow'rs above.
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foresight necessitate the will.
In Theseus this appears; whose youthful joy
Was beasts of chase in forests to destroy:
This gentle knight, inspir'd by jolly May,
Forsook his easy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds pursu'd his way.
Beside him rode Hippolita the queen,
And Emily attir'd in lively green:
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh:
And as he follow'd Mars before, so now
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.
The way that Theseus took was to the wood
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood:

The laund on which they fought, th' appointed place
In which th' uncoupled hounds began the chase,
Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,
That shaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And thence dislodg'd, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood.
Approach'd, and looking underneath the sun,
He saw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow.
Like lightning flam'd their faulchions to and fro,
And shot a dreadful gleam; so strong they stroke,
There seem'd less force requir'd to fell an oak.
He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,
Look'd eager on, but knew not either knight.
Resolv'd to learn, he spurr'd his fiery steed
With goring rowels, to provoke his speed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So soon he was betwixt 'em on the place;
And with his sword unsheath'd, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to cease their strife:
Then with imperious tone pursues his threat;
What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride presume against my laws,
As in a listed field to fight your cause—
Unask'd the royal grant; no marshal by,
As knightly rites require, nor judge to try?
Then Palamon, with scarce recover'd breath,
Thus hasty spoke; we both deserve the death,
And both wou'd die; for look the world around,
A pair so wretched is not to be found.
Our life's a load; encumber'd with the charge,
We long to set th' imprison'd soul at large.
Now as thou art a sovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me;
Let neither find thy grace, for grace is cruelty.
Me first, O kill me first, and cure my woe;
Then sheathe the sword of justice on my foe.

Or kill him first; for when his name is heard,
He foremost will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he; thy mortal foe,
On whom thy grace did liberty bestow,
But first contracted, that, if ever found
By day or night upon th' Athenian ground,
His head should pay the forfeit: see return'd
The perjur'd knight, his oath and honour scorn'd.
For this is he, who with a borrow'd name
And profer'd service, to thy palace came,
Now call'd Philostratus: retain'd by thee,
A traitor trusted, and in high degree,
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
My part remains. From Thebes my birth I own,
And call my self th' unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man; since no disgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke thy chain,
Nor promis'd I thy pris'ner to remain:
The love of liberty with life is giv'n,
And life it self th' inferior gift of heav'n.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I with this Arcite am thy mortal foe:
Then give me death, since I thy life pursue,
For safeguard of thy self, death is my due.
More wou'dst thou know? I love bright Emily,
And for her sake and in her sight will die:
But kill my rival too; for he no less
Deserves; and I, thy righteous doom will bless,
Assur'd that what I lose, he never shall possess.
To this reply'd the stern Athenian prince,
And sourly smil'd, in owning your offence
You judge your self; and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your desert, the death you have decreed;
I seal your doom, and ratifie the deed.

By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die.
He said; dumb sorrow seiz'd the standers-by.
The queen above the rest, by nature good,
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)
For tender pity wept: when she began,
Through the bright quire th' infectious virtue ran.
All dropp'd their tears, ev'n the contended maid,
And thus among themselves they softly said:
What eyes can suffer this unworthy sight!
Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,
The mastership of heav'n in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind:
See their wide streaming wounds; they neither came
For pride of empire, nor desire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause;
But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cause.
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in ev'ry lady's mind,
They left their steeds, and prostrate on the place,
From the fierce king, implor'd th' offenders grace.
He paus'd a while, stood silent in his mood,
(For yet, his rage was boiling in his blood)
But soon his tender mind th' impression felt,
(As softest metals are not slow to melt,
And pity soonest runs in softest minds:)
Then reasons with himself; and first he finds,
His passion cast a mist before his sense,
And either made, or magnify'd th' offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judg'd the cause?
The pris'ner freed himself by nature's laws:
Born free, he sought his right: the man he freed
Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:
Thus pond'ring, he look'd under with his eyes,
And saw the womens tears, and heard their cries;
Which mov'd compassion more: he shook his head,
And softly sighing to himself he said,

Curse on th' unpard'ning prince, whom tears can draw
To no remorse; who rules by lions law,
And deaf to pray'rs, by no submission bow'd,
Rends all alike, the penitent, and proud:
At this, with look serene, he rais'd his head,
Reason resum'd her place, and passion fled:
Then thus aloud he spoke: the pow'r of love,
In earth, and seas, and air, and heav'n above,
Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod,
By daily miracles declar'd a god:
He blinds the wise, gives eye-sight to the blind,
And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,
What hinder'd either in their native soil
At ease to reap the harvest of their toil?
But love, their lord, did otherwise ordain,
And brought 'em in their own despite again,
To suffer death deserv'd; for well they know,
'Tis in my pow'r, and I their deadly foe.
The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,
Is hardly granted to the gods above.
See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains
With which their master, love, rewards their pains:
For sev'n long years, on duty ev'ry day,
Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on,
And ask the fools, they think it wisely done:
Nor ease, nor wealth, nor life it self regard,
For 'tis their maxim, love is love's reward.
This is not all; the fair for whom they strove
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love;
Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,
Her beauty was th' occasion of the war.
But sure a gen'ral doom on man is past,
And all are fools and lovers, first or last:

This both by others and my self I know,
For I have serv'd their sovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female snares, and felt the lovers pain,
And learn'd how far the god can human hearts constrain.
To this remembrance. and the pray'rs of those
Who for th' offending warriors interpose,
I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,
To do me homage as their sov'reign lord;
And as my vassals, to their utmost might,
Assist my person, and assert my right.
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.
Then thus the king his secret thoughts explain'd:
If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deserve
A princess born; and such is she you serve:
For Emily is sister to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known.
But shou'd you combate till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot share a single bed:
As therefore both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to destiny.
Now hear th' award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who best deserves her love.
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you please repair;
But on the day when this returning sun
To the same point through ev'ry sign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring,
In royal lists, to fight before the king;
And then, the knight whom fate or happy chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his opposite,

Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love shall gain;
The vanquish'd party shall their claim release,
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.
The charge be mine t' adorn the chosen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions so renown'd;
And take the patrons place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And heav'n of me so judge, as I shall judge aright.
If both are satisfy'd with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword.
Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And ravish'd Arcite seems to touch the sky:
The whole assembled troop was pleas'd as well,
Extol'd th' award, and on their knees they fell
To bless the gracious king. The knights with leave
Departing from the place, his last commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look,
And from her eyes their inspiration took:
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.
It might be deem'd on our historian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,
If he forgot the vast magnificence
Of royal Theseus, and his large expence.
He first enclos'd for lists a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around:
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.
Within; an amphitheatre appear'd,
Rais'd in degrees; to sixty paces rear'd:
That when a man was plac'd in one degree,
Height was allow'd for him above to see.
Eastward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorn'd the western opposite.

A nobler object than this fabric was,
Rome never saw, nor of so vast a space.
For, rich with spoils of many a conquer'd land,
All arts and artists Theseus could command,
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The master-painters, and the carvers came—
So rose within the compass of the year,
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eastern gate was rais'd above
A temple, sacred to the queen of love:
An altar stood below, on either hand
A priest with roses crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.
The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,
And on the north a turret was enclos'd,
Within the wall, of alabaster white,
And crimson coral, for the queen of night,
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.
Within these oratories might you see
Rich carvings, pourtraitures, and imagery:
Where ev'ry figure to the life express'd
The godhead's pow'r to whom it was address'd.
In Venus' temple, on the sides were seen
The broken slumbers of enamour'd men:
Pray'rs that e'en spoke, and pity seem'd to call,
And issuing sighs that smok'd along the wall:
Complaints, and hot desires, the lover's hell,
And scalding tears, that wore a channel where they fell:
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties
Of loves assurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries.
Beauty, and youth, and wealth, and luxury,
And spritely hope, and short-enduring joy;
And sorceries to raise th' infernal pow'rs,
And sigils fram'd in planetary hours:

Expence, and after-thought, and idle care,
And doubts of motley hue, and dark despair:
Suspicions, and fantastical surmise,
And jealousy suffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes,
Discolouring all she view'd, in tawney dress'd;
Down-look'd, and with a cuckow on her fist.
Oppos'd to her, on t' other side, advance
The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,
Minstrels, and music, poetry, and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All these were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts, and monuments of times before:
And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
For there, th' Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus, was in colours drawn:
Before the palace-gate, in careless dress,
And loose array, sat portress idleness:
There, by the fount, Narcissus pin'd alone;
There Sampson was, with wiser Solomon,
And all the mighty names by love undone;
Medea's charms were there, Circean feasts,
With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youth to beasts.
Here might be seen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And prowess, to the pow'r of love submit:
The spreading snare for all mankind is laid,
And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.
The goddess self, some noble hand had wrought;
Smiling she seem'd, and full of pleasing thought,
From Ocean as she first began to rise,
And smooth'd the ruffled seas, and clear'd the skies;
She trode the brine all bare below the breast,
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the rest:
A lute she held; and on her head was seen
A wreath of roses red, and myrtles green:

Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;
And, by his mother, stood an infant-love,
With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er;
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,
Supply'd with arrows bright and keen, a deadly store.

But in the dome of mighty Mars the red,
With diff'rent figures all the sides were spread:
This temple, less in form, with equal grace
Was imitative of the first in Thrace:
For that cold region was the lov'd abode,
And sov'reign mansion of the warrior-god.
The landscape was a forest wide and bare,
Where neither beast, nor human-kind repair;
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs, instead of trees are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old,
Headless the most, and hideous to behold:
A ratling tempest through the branches went,
That stripp'd 'em bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heav'n froze above, severe, the clouds congeal,
And thro' the crystal vault appear'd the standing hail.
Such was the face without, a mountain stood
Threatning from high, and overlook'd the wood:
Beneath the lowring brow, and on a bent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent;
The frame of burnish'd steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air.
A streight, long entry, to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror over head:
Thence issu'd such a blast, and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door;
In, through that door, a northern light there shone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none:

The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which hew'd by Mars himself, from Indian quarries
came,
The labour of a god; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it strong.
A tun about was ev'ry pillar there;
A polish'd mirrour shone not half so clear.
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason lab'ring in the traitor's thought;
And midwife time the ripen'd plot to murder
brought.
There, the red anger dar'd the pallid fear;
Next stood hypocrisy, with holy leer,
Soft smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown;
Th' assassinating wife, the houshold fiend,
And far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.
On t' other side there stood desruction bare;
Unpunish'd rapine, and a waste of war.
Contest, with sharpen'd knives, in cloysters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language base,
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the
place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotter'd in his hair:
With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome, misfortune sate,
And gloomy discontent, and fell debate,
And madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corpse, in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes display'd:
The city to the soldier's rage resign'd:
Successless wars, and poverty behind;

Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame and steel;
The gasping charioteer, beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruin'd house that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains,
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and smith,
Who forges sharpen'd faulchions, or the scythe.
The scarlet conquest on a tow'r was plac'd,
With shouts, and soldiers acclamations grac'd:
A pointed sword hung threatning o'er his head,
Sustain'd but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars his Ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall,
The last Triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love.
These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born:
All copied from the heav'ns, and ruling force
Of the red star, in his revolving course.
The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,
All sheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the god:
Two geomantick figures were display'd
Above his head, a * warriour and a maid,
One when direct, and one when retrogade.
Tir'd with deformities of death, I haste
To the third temple of Diana chaste.
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the sides, and on the midst a lawn;

* Rubeus, and Puella.

The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Pursu'd the flying deer, the woods with horns resound:
Calistho there stood manifest of shame,
And turn'd a bear, the northern star became:
Her son was next, and by peculiar grace
In the cold circle held the second place:
The stag Acteon in the stream had spy'd
The naked huntress, and, for seeing, dy'd:
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue
The chace, and their mistaken master slew.
Peneian Daphne too was there to see,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree:
Th' adjoining fane th' assembled Greeks express'd,
And hunting of the Caledonian beast—
Oenides' valour, and his envy'd prize;
The fatal pow'r of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor shown,
The murdress mother, and consuming son:
The Volscian queen extended on the plain,
The treason punish'd, and the traitor slain.
The rest were various huntings, well design'd,
And savage beasts destroy'd, of ev'ry kind.
The graceful goddess was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their queen.
Her legs were buskin'd, and the left before,
In act to shoot; a silver bow she bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that soon wou'd wane,
And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again:
With down-cast eyes, as seeming to survey
The dark dominions, her alternate sway;
Before her stood a woman in her throes,
And call'd Lucina's aid, her burden to disclose

All these the painter drew with such command,
That nature snatch'd the pencil from his hand,
Asham'd and angry that his art could feign
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theseus beheld the fanes of ev'ry god,
And thought his mighty cost was well bestow'd.
So princes now their poets should regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
The theatre thus rais'd, the lists enclos'd,
And all with vast magnificence dispos'd;
We leave the monarch pleas'd, and haste to bring
The knights to combate, and their arms to sing.

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR, THE

KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK III.

THE day approach'd when fortune shou'd decide
Th' important enterprize, and give the bride;
For now, the rivals round the world had sought,
And each his number, well appointed, brought.
The nations far and near, contend in choice,
And send the flow'r of war by publick voice;
That after, or before, were never known
Such chiefs; as each an army seem'd alone:
Beside the champions; all of high degree,
Who knighthood lov'd, and deeds of chivalry,
Throng'd to the lists, and envy'd to behold
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
Nor seems it strange; for ev'ry noble knight,
Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,
In such a quarrel wou'd be proud to fight.
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground
(An isle for love, and arms of old renown'd)
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name:
And had the land selected of the best,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.

A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name;
Their arms were sev'ral, as their nations were,
But furnish'd all alike with sword and spear.
Some wore coat-armour, imitating scale;
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail.
Some wore a breast-plate and a light juppon,
Their horses cloth'd with rich caparison:
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use,
Of folded hides; and other shields of pruce.
One hung a pole-axe at his saddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace, to shun the foe:
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With Jambeaux arm'd, and double plates of steel:
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a sleeve embroider'd by his love.
With Palamon, above the rest in place,
Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face:
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:
He look'd a lion with a gloomy stare,
And o'er his eye-brows hung his matted hair:
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with sinews strong,
Broad-shoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)
Were yok'd to draw his car of burnish'd gold.
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,
Conspicuous from afar, and over-look'd the field.
His surcoat was a bear-skin; on his back,
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven-black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet
With sparkling diamonds, and with rubies set:
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair,
And tall as stags, ran loose, and cours'd around his chair,
A match for pards in flight, in grappling, for the bear:

With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the same their necks surround.
Thus thro' the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius king of Inde, a mighty name,
On a bay courser, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horse emboss'd with barb'rous gold.
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace;
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His saddle was of gold, with emeralds set.
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire:
His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue:
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin:
His awful presence did the croud surprize,
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes,
Eyes that confess'd him born for kingly sway,
So fierce, they flash'd intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound.
A laurel wreath'd his temples, fresh, and green;
And myrtle-sprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd between.
Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily-white.
His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All arm'd for battle; save their heads were bare.

Words and devices blaz'd on ev'ry shield,
And pleasing was the terror of the field :
For kings, and dukes, and barons you might see,
Like sparkling stars, though diff'rent in degree,
All for th' increase of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king, tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,
And beasts in gambols frisk'd before their honest god.
In this array the war of either side
Through Athens pass'd with military pride.
At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn;
Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flow'rs the pots adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feasts;
So Theseus will'd, in honour of his guests:
Himself with open arms the king embrac'd,
Then all the rest in their degrees were grac'd.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For ev'ry house was proud to lodge a knight.
I pass the royal treat, nor must relate
The gifts bestow'd, nor how the champions sate;
Who first, who last, or how the knights address'd
Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast;
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprise,
Soft am'rous sighs, and silent love of eyes.
The rivals call my muse another way,
To sing their vigils for th' ensuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night;
And Phospher on the confines of the light,
Promis'd the sun, ere day began to spring;
The tuneful lark already stretch'd her wing,
And flick'ring on her nest, made short essays to sing;
When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took, to the royal lists, his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own house to pray.

There, falling on his knees before her shrine,
He thus implor'd with pray'rs her pow'r divine.
Creator Venus, genial pow'r of love,
The bliss of men below, and gods above;
Beneath the sliding sun thou run'st thy race,
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.
Thee, goddess, thee the storms of winter fly,
Earth smiles with flow'rs renewing; laughs the sky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.
For thee the lion loaths the taste of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood:
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair:
All nature is thy province, life thy care;
Thou mad'st the world, and dost the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increase of Jove, companion of the sun;
If e'er Adonis touch'd thy tender heart,
Have pity, goddess, for thou know'st the smart.
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my sorrow wou'd be some relief:
Light suff'rings give us leisure to complain;
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
O goddess, tell thy self what I would say,
Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might,
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight;
A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
A foe profess'd to barren chastity.
Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
Nor chuse I more to vanquish, than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me blest,
Let fate, or partial chance, dispose the rest:

Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies,
On whom he favours to confer the prize;
With smiling aspect you serenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The fates but only spin the courser clue,
The finest of the wool is left for you.
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,
And let the sisters cut below your line:
The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.
But if you this ambitious pray'r deny,
(A wish, I grant, beyond mortality)
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And I once dead, let him possess her charms.
Thus ended he; then, with observance due,
The sacred incense on her altar threw:
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious goddess gave the sign,
Her statute shook, and trembled all the shrine.
Pleas'd Palamon the tardy Omen took:
For, since the flames pursu'd the trailing smoke,
He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To distance driv'n, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.
Now morn with rosy light had streak'd the sky,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily;
Address'd her early steps to Cynthia's fane,
In state attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,
Incense, and od'rous gums, and cover'd fire.
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,
Nor wanted ought besides in honour of the moon.
Now while the temple smok'd with hollow'd steam,
They wash the virgin in a living stream;

The secret ceremonies I conceal;
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful to reveal:
But such they were as pagan use requir'd,
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,
Whose eyes profane, their chaste mysterious rites
Might turn to scandal, or obscene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the rest,
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.
Her shining hair, uncomb'd, was loosely spread,
A crown of mastless oak adorn'd her head:
When to the shrine approach'd, the spotless maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid:
(The rites were such as were observ'd of old,
By Statius in his Theban story told.)
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,
Thus lowly she preferr'd her chaste request.
O goddess, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heav'n and earth and seas are seen;
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere;
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,
When hissing thro' the skies the feather'd deaths were dealt:
As I desire to live a virgin-life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife!
Thy votress from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.
Like death, thou know'st, I loath the nuptial state,
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate.
Where love is duty, on the female side,
On theirs meer sensual gust, and sought with surly pride.

Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen
In heav'n, earth, hell, and ev'ry where a queen,
Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on some other love.
Or if my frowning stars have so decreed,
That one must be rejected, one succeed,
Make him my lord within whose faithful breast
Is fix'd my image, and who loves me best.
But, oh! ev'n that avert! I chuse it not,
But take it as the least unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin-train;
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,
And only make the beasts of chace my prey!
The flames ascend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameless maid address'd her pray'r.
When lo! the burning fire that shone so bright,
Flew off, all sudden, with extinguish'd light,
And left one altar dark, a little space;
Which turn'd self-kindled, and renew'd the blaze:
The other victor-flame a moment stood,
Then fell, and lifeless left th' extinguish'd wood;
For ever lost, th' irrevocable light
Forsook the blackning coals, and sunk to night:
At either end it whistled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, so dropp'd the dew;
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue.
The maid from that ill Omen turn'd her eyes,
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies,
Nor knew what signify'd the boding sign,
But found the pow'rs displeas'd, and fear'd the wrath divine:
Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright.

The pow'r, behold! the pow'r in glory shone,
By her bent bow, and her keen arrows known:
The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood—
Then gracious thus began; dismiss thy fear,
And heav'ns unchang'd decrees attentive hear:
More pow'rful gods have torne thee from my side,
Unwilling to resign, and doom'd a bride:
The two contending knights are weigh'd above;
One Mars protects, and one the queen of love:
But which the man, is in the thund'rer's breast,
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee best.
The fire that once extinct reviv'd again,
Foreshews the love allotted to remain.
Farewel, she said, and vanish'd from the place;
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.
Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,
Disclaim'd, and now no more a sister of the wood:
But to the parting goddess thus she pray'd;
Propitious still be present to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favour'd maid.
Then sighing she return'd; but smil'd betwixt,
With hopes, and fears, and joys with sorrows mixt.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who shar'd the heptarchy of pow'r,
His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
T' adore with pagan rites the pow'r armipotent:
Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,
And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray—
Strong god of arms, whose iron sceptre sways
The freezing north, and Hyperborean seas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's winter coast,
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honour'd most;
There most, but ev'ry where thy pow'r is known;
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:

Terror is thine, and wild amazement flung
From out thy chariot withers ev'n the strong:
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my pray'r,
If ought I have atchiev'd deserve thy care:
If to my utmost pow'r with sword and shield
I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,
And falling in my rank, still kept the field;
Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustain'd,
That Emily by conquest may be gain'd.
Have pity on my pains; nor those unknown
To Mars, which when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy stubborn heart has soften'd into love:
Now by her blandishments and pow'rful charms
When yielded, she lay curling in thy arms,
Ev'n by thy shame, if shame it may be call'd,
When Vulcan had thee in his net inthrall'd;
O envy'd ignominy, sweet disgrace,
When ev'ry god that saw thee, wish'd thy place!
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right;
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractis'd to persuade;
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,
But caught my self, lie strugling in the snare;
And she I love, or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well, and pays me with disdain.
For sure I am, unless I win in arms,
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my strength avail, unless by thee
Endu'd with force, I gain the victory:
Then for the fire which warm'd thy gen'rous heart,
Pity thy subject's pains, and equal smart.

So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conquest thine:
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife
Immortal, be the bus'ness of my life;
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among,
High on the burnish'd roof, my banner shall be hung,
Rank'd with my champions' bucklers, and below
With arms revers'd, th' atchievements of my foe:
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day succeeds,
Thy smoaking altar shall be fat with food
Of incense, and the grateful steam of blood;
Burnt off'rings morn and ev'ning shall be thine,
And fires eternal in thy temple shine.
The bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserv'd for thee.
So may my arms with victory be blest,
I ask no more; let fate dispose the rest.

The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the close
A hollow groan, a murm'ring wind arose,
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,
The storm rush'd in, and Arcite stood aghast;
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.

Then from the ground a scent began to rise,
Sweet-smelling, as accepted sacrifice:
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aspire
With od'rous incense Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:
At length the nodding statute clash'd his arms,
And with a sullen sound, and feeble cry,
Half sunk, and half pronounc'd the word of victory.

For this, with soul devout, he thank'd the god,
And of success secure, return'd to his abode.
These vows thus granted, rais'd a strife above
Betwixt the god of war and queen of love.
She granting first, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,
And seem'd unwilling to decide the strife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,
And found a way the diff'rence to compose.
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,
He seldom does a good with good intent:
Wayward, but wise, by long experience taught,
To please both parties, for ill ends he sought:
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, though outrun.
By fortune he was now to Venus trin'd,
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was join'd:
Of him disposing in his own abode,
He sooth'd the goddess, while he gull'd the god:
Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife;
Thy Palamon shall have his promis'd wife,
And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight
With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.
Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place,
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me, when I press th' etherial plains;
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
Mine is the shipwreck, in a watry sign;
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.
Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blasting winds, and poison'd air,
Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair.
The throtling quinsey 'tis my star appoints,
And rheumatism I send to rack the joints:
When churls rebel against their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence;

And housing in the lion's hateful sign,
Bought senates, and deserting troops are mine.
Mine is the privy pois'ning, I command
Unkindly seasons, and ungrateful land.
By me kings palaces are push'd to ground,
And miners crush'd beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I slew Sampson, when the pillar'd hall
Fell down and crush'd the many with the fall.
My looking is the sire of pestilence,
That sweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but trust thy grandsire's art;
Mars shall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, though diff'rent your complexions are,
The family of heav'n for men should war.
Th' expedient pleas'd, where neither lost his right:
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.
The management they left to Chrono's care.
Now turn we to th' effect, and sing the war—

In Athens, all was pleasure, mirth, and play,
All proper to the spring and sprightly May:
Which ev'ry soul inspir'd with such delight,
'Twas justing all the day, and love at night.
Heav'n smil'd, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world, as when it first began.
At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
And dream'd the future fight, and early rose.

Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,
As at a signal giv'n, the streets with clamours ring:
At once the croud arose; confus'd and high
Ev'n from the heav'n was heard a shouting cry;
For Mars was early up, and rouz'd the sky.
The gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharp'ning their sights, and leaning from their stars.
The neighing of the gen'rous horse was heard,
For battle by the busy groom prepar'd:
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,
Clatt'ring of armour, furbish'd for the field:

Crouds to the castle mounted up the street,
Batt'ring the pavement with their coursers feet.
The greedy sight might there devour the gold
Of glittring arms, too dazling to behold;
And polish'd steel that cast the view aside,
And crested morions, with their plumy pride:
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
In gaudy liv'ries march, and quaint attires.
One lac'd the helm, another held the lance;
A third the shining buckler did advance.
The courser paw'd the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,
And nails for loosen'd spears, and thongs for shields provide.
The yeomen guard the streets, in seemly bands;
And clowns come crouding on, with cudgels in their hands.

The trumpets, next the gate, in order plac'd,
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast:
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.
The throng is in the midst: the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few.
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk:
Factious, and fav'ring this or t' other side,
As their strong fancies and weak reason guide.
Their wagers back their wishes: numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold;
So vig'rous are his eyes, such rays they cast,
So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.
But most their looks on the black monarch bend,
His rising muscles, and his brawn commend;
His double-biting ax, and beamy spear,
Each asking a gigantic force to rear.

All spoke as partial favour mov'd the mind;
And safe themselves, at others cost divin'd.
Wak'd by the cries, th' Athenian chief arose,
The knightly forms of combat to dispose;
And passing thro' th' obsequious guards, he sate
Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;
There, for the two contending knights he sent.
Arm'd Cap-a-pe, with rev'rence low they bent.
He smil'd on both, and with superior look
Alike their offer'd adoration took.
The people press on ev'ry side to see
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then signing to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud
The king at arms bespeaks the knights and list'ning croud. —
Our sovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace, and in-born clemency,
He modifies his first severe decree;
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death shou'd terminate their strife;
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life.
But issues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That slings afar, and ponyards hand to hand,
Be banish'd from the field; that none shall dare
With short'ned sword to stab in closer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.
The turney is allow'd but one career
Of the tough ash with the sharp-grinded spear.
But knights unhors'd may rise from off the plain,
And fight on foot, their honour to regain:
Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground
Be slain, but pris'ners to the pillar bound,

At either barrier plac'd; nor (captives made,)
Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.
The chief of either side, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.
Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young,
Fight each his fill with swords and maces long.
The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims, and vast applause is rent:
Heav'n guard a prince so gracious and so good,
So just, and yet so provident of blood!
This was the gen'ral cry. The trumpets sound,
And warlike symphony is heard around.
The marching troops thro' Athens take their way,
The great earl-marshal orders their array.
The fair from high the passing pomp behold;
A rain of flow'rs is from the windows roll'd.
The casements are with golden tissue spread,
And horses hoofs, for earth, on silken tap'stry tread.
The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and close his either side
Next after these, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cause, and the reward of strife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marshall'd in degree.
Thus thro' the southern gate they take their way,
And at the lists arriv'd ere prime of day.
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And, wheeling east and west, before their many ride.
Th' Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the queen, and Emily:
Next these, the kindred of the crown are grac'd
With nearer seats, and lords by ladies plac'd.
Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud
In rush'd at once a rude promiscuous crowd:
The guards, and them each other overbare,
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.

Now chang'd the jarring noise to whispers low,
As winds forsaking seas more softly blow;
When at the western gate, on which the car
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the god of war,
Proud Arcite entring arm'd before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and display'd abroad
The bloody colours of his patron god.
At that self-moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the rising sun;
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.
From east to west, look all the world around,
Two troops so match'd were never to be found:
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,
In stature siz'd; so proud an equipage:
The nicest eye cou'd no distinction make,
Where lay th' advantage, or what side to take.
Thus rang'd, the herald for the last proclaims
A silence, while they answer'd to their names:
For so the king decreed, to shun with care
The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.
The tale was just, and then the gates were clos'd;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.
The herald's last retir'd, and loudly cry'd,
The fortune of the field be fairly try'd.
At this, the challenger with fierce defy
His trumpet sounds; the challeng'd makes reply:
With clangor rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.
Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the rest,
Or at the helmet pointed or the crest,
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
And spurring see decrease the middle space.
A cloud of smoke envelops either host,
And all at once the combatants are lost:

Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,
Coursers with coursers justling, men with men:
As lab'ring in eclipse, a while they stay,
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
Is chang'd, and war appears a grizly sight.
Two troops in fair array one moment show'd,
The next, a field with fallen bodies strow'd:
Not half the number in their seats are found;
But men and steeds lie grov'ling on the ground.
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,
The steeds without their riders scour the field.
The knights unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;
The glitt'ring fauchions cast a gleaming light:
Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound;
Out spins the streaming blood, and dies the ground.
The mighty maces with such haste descend,
They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend.
This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:
That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,
And floundring throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this disabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he must abide:
There goes a captive led on t' other side.
By fits they cease; and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
Full oft the rivals met, and neither spar'd
His utmost force, and each forgot to ward.
The head of this was to the saddle bent,
That other backward to the crupper sent:
Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.

So deep their fauchions bite, that ev'ry stroke
Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far asunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and steel they meet again.
So when a tyger sucks the bullock's blood,
A famish'd lion issuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food;
Each claims possession, neither will obey,
But both their paws are fasten'd on the prey:
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,
The swains come arm'd between, and both to distance drive.
At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend
By course of time to their appointed end;
So when the sun to west was far declin'd,
And both afresh in mortal battle join'd,
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For turning short, he struck with all his might
Full on the helmet of th' unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he stagger'd with the blow,
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with such force he struck, he fell'd him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:
O'erpower'd at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.
Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And worse than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize
The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,

Bade cease the war; pronouncing from on high
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The sound of trumpets to the voice reply'd,
And round the royal lists the heralds cry'd,
Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride.
The people rend the skies with vast applause;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cause.
Arcite is own'd ev'n by the gods above,
And conqu'ring Mars insults the queen of love.
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
And Jove's usurping arms in heav'n prevail'd.
Laugh'd all the pow'rs who favour tyranny;
And all the standing army of the sky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And weeping, on the lists distill'd her tears;
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman most,
And in her champion foil'd, the cause of love is lost.
Till Saturn said, fair daughter, now be still,
The blustring fool has satisfy'd his will:
His boon is giv'n; his knight has gain'd the day,
But lost the prize, th' arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free.
Now while the heralds run the lists around,
And Arcite, Arcite, heav'n and earth resound;
A miracle (nor less it could be call'd)
Their joy with unexpected sorrow pall'd.
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride:
Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the salutations of the croud.
Then spurring at full speed, ran endlong on
Where Theseus sate on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily;
Then passing, to the saddle-bow he bent;
A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent;

For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow fortune, where she leads the way:)
Just then, from earth sprung out a flashing fire,
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire:
The startling steed was seiz'd with sudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pummel cast the knight:
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his countenance in a little space,
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.
Help was at hand; they rear'd him from the ground,
And from his cumb'rous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;
It came, but clogg'd with symptoms of his death.
The saddle-bow the noble parts had press'd,
All bruis'd and mortify'd his manly breast.
Him still entranc'd, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.
At length he wak'd, and with a feeble cry,
The word he first pronounc'd was Emily.
Mean time the king, tho' inwardly he mourn'd,
In pomp triumphant to the town return'd,
Attended by the chiefs, who fought the field;
(Now friendly mix'd, and in one troop compell'd.)
Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Tho' most were sorely wounded, none were slain.
The surgeons soon despoil'd 'em of their arms,
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms;
Foment the bruises, and the pains asswage,
And heal their inward hurts with sov'reign draughts of sage.
The king in person visits all around,
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound;

Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.
None was disgrac'd; for falling is no shame;
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.
The vent'rous knight is from the saddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own.
If crowns and palms the conqu'ring side adorn,
The victor under better stars was born:
The brave man seeks not popular applause,
Nor overpow'r'd with arms deserts his cause;
Unsham'd, though foil'd, he does the best he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theseus smil'd on all with equal grace;
And each was set according to his place.
With ease were reconcil'd the diff'ring parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.
At length they took their leave, the time expir'd,
Well pleas'd; and to their sev'ral homes retir'd.
Mean while the health of Arcite still impairs;
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leeches cares:
Swoln is his breast, his inward pains increase,
All means are us'd, and all without success.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art:
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mold of nature's fabric is destroy'd,
Her vessels discompos'd, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begin to swell:
All out of frame is ev'ry secret cell,
Nor can the good receive, or bad expel.
Those breathing organs thus within opprest,
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.
Nought profits him to save abandon'd life,
Nor vomits upward aid, nor downward laxatife.

The midmost region batter'd and destroy'd,
When nature cannot work, th' effect of art is void.
For physic can but mend our crazy state,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride,
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gain'd hardly, against right, and unenjoy'd.
When 'twas declar'd, all hope of life was past,
Conscience (that of all physic works the last)
Caus'd him to send for Emily in haste.
With her, at his desire, came Palamon:
Then on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun;
No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,
For you, whom best I love and value most;
(But to your service I bequeath my ghost;
Which from this mortal body when unty'd,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
But wait officious, and your steps attend:)
How I have lov'd, excuse my faultring tongue,
My spirit's feeble, and my pains are strong:
This I may say, I only grieve to die
Because I lose my charming Emily:
To die, when heav'n had put you in my pow'r,
Fate could not chuse a more malicious hour!
What greater curse could envious fortune give,
Than just to die, when I began to live!
Vain men, how vanishing a bliss we crave,
Now warm in love, now with'ring in the grave!
Never, O never more to see the sun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone!
This fate is common; but I lose my breath
Near bliss, and yet not bless'd before my death.
Farewel; but take me dying in your arms,
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:

This hand I cannot but in death resign;
Ah, could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd,
Am pleas'd to die; but hear me speak my last.
Ah! my sweet foe, for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds,
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds;
And much I doubt, should heav'n my life prolong,
I should return to justify my wrong:
For while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of pow'r to sin.
With mortal hatred I pursu'd his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife;
Nor I, but as I lov'd: yet all combin'd,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind,
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire;
For still our kindred souls had one desire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and justify'd his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight,
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is compriz'd in good;
So help me heav'n, in all the world is none
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.
He loves you too; with such a holy fire,
As will not, cannot but with life expire:
Our vow'd affections both have often try'd,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then by my love's inviolable band,
By my long suff'ring, and my short command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon.

This was his last; for death came on amain,
And exercis'd below his iron reign;

Then upward, to the seat of life he goes;
Sense fled before him, what he touch'd he froze:
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,
Though less and less of Emily he saw:
So, speechless, for a little space he lay;
Then grasp'd the hand he held, and sigh'd his soul away.

But whither went his soul, let such relate
Who search the secrets of the future state:
Divines can say but what themselves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative:
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
And faith it self be lost in certainty.
To live uprightly then is sure the best,
To save our selves, and not to damn the rest.
The soul of Arcite went, where heathens go,
Who better live than we, tho' less they know.

In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent, he wept, asham'd to shew his tears:
Emilia shriek'd but once, and then oppress'd
With sorrow sunk upon her lover's breast,
Till Theseus in his arms convey'd with care,
Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair.
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,
When just approaching to the nuptial state.
But like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,
That all at once it falls, and cannot last.
The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,
That laugh'd so late, becomes the scene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both sexes, ev'ry state,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Not greater grief in falling Troy was seen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with dust deform'd their hoary hair,
The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tare.

Why wou'dst thou go, with one consent they cry,
When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily!
Theseus himself, who shou'd have cheer'd the grief
Of others, wanted now the same relief.
Old Egeus only could revive his son,
Who various changes of the world had known;
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,
Still alt'ring, never in a steady state:
Good after ill, and after pain, delight;
Alternate, like the scenes of day and night:
Since ev'ry man who lives, is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,
Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims, to th' appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Ev'n kings but play; and when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.
With words like these the crowd was satisfi'd,
And so they would have been, had Theseus di'd.
But he, their king, was lab'ring in his mind,
A fitting place for fun'ral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead design'd.
And after long debate, at last he found
(As love it self had mark'd the spot of ground)
That grove for ever green, that conscious lawnd,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand:
That where he fed his amorous desires
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,
There other flames might waste his earthly part,
And, burn his limbs, where love had burn'd his heart.
This once resolv'd, the peasants were enjoin'd
Sere wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find.
With sounding axes to the grove they go,
Hew, split, and lay the fewel on a row,

Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepar'd,
On which the lifeless body should be rear'd,
Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid
The corpse of Arcite, in like robes array'd.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle, spread.
A sword keen-edg'd within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field:
Bare was his manly visage on the bier;
Menac'd his count'nance; ev'n in death severe.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in solemn state, a public sight.
Groans, cries, and howlings fill the crowded place,
And unaffected sorrow sate on ev'ry face.
Sad Palamon above the rest appears,
In sable garments, dew'd with gushing tears:
His auburn locks on either shoulder flow'd,
Which to the fun'ral of his friend he vow'd:
But Emily, as chief, was next his side,
A virgin-widow, and a Mourning Bride.
And that the princely obsequies might be
Perform'd according to his high degree,
The steed that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapp'd with polish'd steel, all shining bright,
And cover'd with th' atchievements of the knight.
The riders rode abreast, and one his shield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and glorious to behold,
The costly quiver, all of burnish'd gold.
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,
And weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier;
With sober pace they march'd, and often staid,
And thro' the master-street the corpse convey'd.
The houses to their tops with black were spread,
And ev'n the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right-side of the pall old Egeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theseus wept:

Each bore a golden bowl of work divine,
With honey fill'd, and milk, and mix'd with ruddy wine.
Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,
And after him appear'd th' illustrious train:
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,
With cover'd fire, the fun'ral pile to light.
With high devotion was the service made,
And all the rites of pagan-honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, must send the shaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathoms broad,
With crackling straw beneath in due proportion strow'd.
The fabric seem'd a wood of rising green,
With sulphur and bitumen cast between,
To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-ash, the mother of the spear;
The mourner yew, and builder oak were there:
The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a softer grain,
And laurels, which the gods for conqu'ring chiefs ordain.
How they were rank'd, shall rest untold by me,
With nameless nymphs that liv'd in ev'ry tree;
Nor how the dryads, and the woodland train,
Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
Nor how the birds to foreign seats repair'd,
Or beasts, that bolted out, and saw the forest bar'd:
Nor how the ground, now clear'd, with ghastly fright,
Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.
The straw, as first I said, was laid below;
Of chips and sere-wood was the second row;
The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd;
The fourth high stage the fragrant odours held,

And peals, and precious stones, and rich array;
In midst of which, embalm'd, the body lay.
The service sung, the maid with mourning eyes
The stubble fir'd; the smouldring flames arise:
This office done, she sunk upon the ground;
But what she spoke, recover'd from her swoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dress;
But by themselves the tender sex may guess.
While the devouring fire was burning fast,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;
And some their shields, and some their lances threw,
And gave their warrior's ghost a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood,
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,
And hissing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice resound:
Hail, and farewel, they shouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:
Still as they turn'd, they beat their clatt'ring shields;
The women mix their cries; and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continu'd all the night,
And fun'ral games were play'd at new-returning light:
Who naked wrestled best besmear'd with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor wou'd you attend,
But briefly haste to my long story's end.
I pass the rest; the year was fully mourn'd,
And Palamon long since to Thebes return'd;
When, by the Grecians general consent,
At Athens Theseus held his parliament:
Among the laws that pass'd, it was decreed,
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage shou'd be freed;

Reserving homage to th' Athenian throne,
To which the sov'reign summon'd Palamon.
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.
The monarch mounts the throne, and plac'd on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily.
So call'd, she came; the senate rose, and paid
Becoming rev'rence to the royal maid;
And first soft whispers through th' assembly went:
With silent wonder then they watch'd th' event.
All hush'd, the king arose with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face.
At length he sigh'd; and having first prepar'd
Th' attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.
The cause and spring of motion, from above
Hung down on earth the golden chain of love:
Great was th' effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent.
Fire, flood, and earth, and air by this were bound,
And love, the common link, the new creation crown'd:
The chain still holds; for though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The same first mover certain bounds has plac'd,
How long those perishable forms shall last;
Nor can they last beyond the time assign'd
By that all-seeing, and all-making mind:
Shorten their hours they may; (for will is free;)
But never pass th' appointed destiny.
So men oppress'd, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.
Then since those forms begin, and have their end,
On some unalter'd cause they sure depend:
Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole,
Who gives us life, and animating soul;

For nature cannot from a part derive
That being, which the whole can only give:
He perfect, stable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and diff'rent in degree.
Plants, beasts, and man, and as our organs are,
We more or less of his perfection share.
But, by a long descent, th' etherial fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire:
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,
And the same matter makes another mass:
This law th' omniscient pow'r was pleas'd to give,
That ev'ry kind should by succession live;
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated species still remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees:
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays,
Supreme in state; and in three more decays:
So wears the paving pebble in the street,
And towns and tow'rs their fatal periods meet;
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lye,
Forsaken of their springs; and leave their channels dry.
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,
Then form'd, the little heart begins to beat;
Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then, helpless, in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and issuing into man,
Grudges their life, from whence his own began:
Retchless of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne:
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last;
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.

Some thus; but thousands more in flow'r of age,
(For few arrive to run the latter stage.)
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,
And others whelm'd beneath the stormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whose command we perish, and we spring?
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordain'd to die,
To make a virtue of necessity;
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain:
The bad grows better, which we well sustain,
And cou'd we chuse the time, and choose aright,
'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But serv'd our friends, and well secur'd our fame;
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose:
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief:
Enjoying, while we live, the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flow'r.
Then round our death-bed ev'ry friend shou'd run,
And joy us of our conquest, early won,
While the malicious world with envious tears
Shou'd grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honor dead,
Why shou'd we mourn, that he so soon is freed;
Or call untimely, what the gods decreed?
With grief as just, a friend may be deplor'd,
From a foul prison to free air restor'd.
Ought he to thank his kinsman, or his wife,
Cou'd tears recall him into wretched life?
Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost;
And worse than both, offends his happy ghost.
What then remains, but after past annoy,
To take the good vicissitude of joy?

To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,
And in one point th' extremes of grief to join;
That thence resulting joy may be renew'd,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propose, that Palamon shall be
In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gain'd th' assent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has born the faithful knight,
And well deserv'd, had fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault; since Emily
By Arcite's death from former vows is free:
If you, fair sister, ratify th' accord,
And take him for your husband, and your lord,
T'is no dishonour to confer your grace
On one descended from a royal race:
And were he less, yet years of service past
From grateful souls exact reward at last:
Pity is heav'ns and yours: nor can she find
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind.

He said; she blush'd; and as o'eraw'd by might,
Seem'd to give Theseus, what she gave the knight.
Then turning to the Theban, thus he said;
Small arguments are needful to persuade
Your temper to comply with my command;
And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight,
And bless'd with nuptial bliss the sweet laborious night.
Eros, and Anteros, on either side,
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;
And long-attending Hymen from above
Showr'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.

All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day discolour'd with domestic strife;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believ'd,
Secure repose, and kindness undeceiv'd.
Thus heav'n, beyond the compass of his thought,
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.
So may the queen of love long duty bless,
And all true lovers find the same success.

AN

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